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Mechanisms for the strategic implementation, development and monitoring of inter-agency child protection policy and practice in the UK: the role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and (Area) Child Protection Committees ((A)CPCs)

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Introduction

The University of Edinburgh/NSPCC Centre for UK-wide Learning in Child Protection (CLiCP) is a research centre based within the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh. It conducts research and provides analysis and commentary on child protection policy across the UK: in each jurisdiction and UK-wide.

A major focus of CLiCPs work involves the tracking and analysis of the content and direction of child protection policy and developments across the UK. We intend to build incrementally towards a general overview of child protection in the UK over a two year period (2008-2010) by producing a series of papers, each based on analysis of a key aspect of child protection. This paper considers the role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and (Area) Child Protection Committees ((A)CPCs) in providing the strategic implementation, development and monitoring of inter-agency child protection policy and practice across the UK. The main focus is on recent reform of these mechanisms. The paper outlines the structures which are currently in place in each part of the UK. It then discusses the functions, membership, funding and performance management arrangements of the various structures in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Background

Managers from different agencies were first brought together to co-ordinate the activities of agencies engaged in child protection work following the Maria Colwell Inquiry in 1974 (Department of Health and Social Security 1974). The Inquiry found that the lack of, or ineffectiveness of, communication and co-

ordination between the agencies involved in Maria's care contributed to her death. As a result, systems and processes for interagency co-operation were developed across the UK to promote a multi disciplinary, inter agency strategic approach to child protection issues in



local areas. Since 1974 Area Review Committees, followed by ACPCs and CPCs have had responsibility for promoting inter agency work to protect children, for ensuring agencies are aware of their child protection responsibilities and for monitoring and evaluating how well child protection services are working (Skinner and Bell 2007; Morrison and Lewis 2005). The effectiveness of such structures has, however, been questioned for many years and recent review and reform of the composition and functioning of ACPCs/ CPCs in recent years is a response to these ongoing concerns. Statutory LSCBs have replaced ACPCs in England and Wales under the Children Act 2004, and a Bill to introduce a new statutory regional Safeguarding Board (SBNi) to replace Area Child Protection Committees in Northern Ireland is currently logged in the Northern Ireland Assembly. In contrast to the other parts of the UK the Scottish Government has no plans to put its CPCs on a statutory footing. In 2005, the then government did, however, introduce new model guidance for CPCs to overcome some of the problems associated with the existing structure.

Structures

England & Wales

The Joint Chief Inspectors report on arrangements to safeguard children (Department of Health 2002) was highly critical of ACPCs and provided the impetus for reform in England and Wales:

In the majority of areas the ACPC was a weak body that was not exercising effective leadership of the safeguarding agenda across agencies effectively ... local agencies did not generally accept that they were accountable to the local ACPC for safeguarding arrangements.

The report commented that ACPCs did not command the authority to require local agencies to report on how they undertook their safeguarding duties. It noted that representation on the ACPC was from different levels of seniority in constituent organisations and some key agencies were not represented at all. It concluded that there was a need to consider whether ACPCs should be established on a statutory basis to ensure adequate

accountability and funding. Lord Laming was similarly critical of ACPCs in his report into the death of Victoria Climbié (2003). The government's decision to place LSCBs on a statutory footing and create directors of children's services responsible for ensuring their effectiveness, was a response to Lord Laming's recommendation that there should be a line of accountability from frontline services through to government. Its intention to disband ACPCs was announced in Every Child Matters (DfES 2003) and under the Children Act 2004 LSCBs replaced non statutory ACPCs. The Act required each local authority in England and Wales to establish an LSCB. In England the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 came into force on 1st April 2006. In Wales LSCBs were established on 1 October 2006 under the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Wales) Regulations 2006.

LSCB objectives as set out in the Children Act 2004 are:

to co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority and to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose.

While the LSCB has a role in co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of individuals' and organisations' work it is not, however, accountable for their operational work. All board partners retain their own existing lines of accountability.

The work of LSCBs is part of the wider context of children's trust arrangements. It contributes to the five Every Child Matters outcomes for improving the well being of children, with a particular focus on the staying safe outcome. The children's trust has a wider role than the LSCB in planning and delivery of children's services. All local areas must produce a Children and Young people's Plan (CYPP) and LSCBs contribute to and work within the framework established by the CYPP. In Wales, as in England, each local authority is required to produce a CYPP which sets out the improvements to be made with reference to the Assembly Government's seven core aims

and LSCB activities should form part of the CYPP.

Morrison and Lewis (2005) argue that the success of LSCBs will depend in part on their relationship with other children's planning fora and that if there is to be an improved interface between universal, targeted and specialist services there needs to be a clearer and more effective working relationship between LSCBs and children's trusts. Several participants who were interviewed for a Priority Review (a non scientific way of gathering evidence about how a Government objective is being delivered) of LSCBs (DfES 2006) expressed uncertainty over the accountability relationship between the children's trust and the LSCB and were unclear about respective responsibilities in improving safeguarding standards and outcomes for children. The review found that the Director of Children's Services often chaired the children's trust and the LSCB limiting the potential for challenge of local authority services. It recommended that there was a need for greater clarity about the relationship between LSCBs and children's trusts.

Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act (Welsh Assembly Government 2004), which provides guidance for LSCBs in Wales, did not attempt to prescribe how agencies should manage relationships between LSCBs and other partnership organisations (Children and Young People's Partnerships; Community Safety Partnerships; and Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnerships). Statutory partners of LSCBs were, however, encouraged to develop structures to optimise joint working arrangements, reduce duplication and provide clear lines of accountability. The guidance recommended that agencies consider the development of arrangements to bring together senior officers from each of the key agencies, with statutory responsibilities or duties under the Children Act 2004, as members of a Strategic Co-ordination Group to take responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of the various bodies and to guide the strategic direction of the key partners that would deliver those statutory duties. Under such arrangements, LSCBs would retain overall responsibility for their statutory functions but would work through the Strategic Group and follow the strategic lead set by that

Group. A ministerial review of LSCBs in 2008 found that most had developed such arrangements. However, since publication of the guidance to LSCBs, work has proceeded on the establishment of Local Service Boards and the Welsh review recommended that consideration should be given to the strategic role that Local Service Boards might provide in setting the strategic direction for and overseeing the work of LSCBs and other partnership bodies. LSCBs would retain overall responsibility for their statutory functions but would follow the strategic lead set by the Local Service Board.

LSCBs in Wales are represented on four regional Child Protection Forums, each based on one of the four police force areas. The forums are aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and the development of good practice in child protection amongst LSCBs in their area; developing and reviewing regional protocols and procedures within the framework of Welsh Assembly Government guidance and the All Wales Child Protection Procedures; developing and reviewing multi-agency training; and promoting inter-agency co-operation on children's safeguards. They have no statutory basis but provide a valuable tool for inter-agency co-operation and joint working.

Northern Ireland

Although plans for reform are well under way, at the time of writing (October 2008) ACPCs and Child Protection Panels (CPPs) still operate in Northern Ireland. Co-operating to Safeguard Children (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2003) provides guidance on their operation. It states that there should be an ACPC in each Health and Social Services (HSS) Board area to determine the strategy for safeguarding children and to develop and disseminate policies and procedures. In addition, each community based trust should have a CPP to implement locally the ACPCs policy and procedures; consideration should also be given to establishing a CPP in hospital trusts. The ACPC and its chair are accountable to the HSS Board but ACPC members are also accountable to the agencies that they represent. As the body with lead responsibility for children's services planning, each HSS Board has lead responsibility for the

establishment and effective working of ACPCs. The role of the ACPC in Northern Ireland is to develop a strategic approach to child protection within the overall children's planning process. Each HSS board is required to produce a children's services plan and ACPCs should contribute to and work within the children's services planning process.

In 2002 a Private Member's Bill sponsored by Councillor Patricia Lewsley, MLA, designed to strengthen the function of ACPCs by, among other things, putting them on a statutory footing, was due to have its first reading in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Events were, however, overtaken by the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly on the same date. In 2006 an inspection report into child protection arrangements (Social Services Inspectorate 2006) identified the same failings of ACPCs in Northern Ireland as Chief Inspectors (Department of Health 2002) and Laming had in England (2003). The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) recognised that current ACPC and CPP structures required reform and on 20 March 2006 the Secretary of State announced a range of measures to strengthen child protection arrangements in Northern Ireland, including the establishment of a regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) to replace ACPCs. A Safeguarding Bill is currently logged in the Northern Ireland assembly under which ACPCs will be replaced with a single statutory Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) with responsibility for strategic matters and a direct reporting line to the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Five Safeguarding Panels, one in each Health and Social Services Trust, will have a co-ordinating and operational role.

As a regional, overarching body with responsibility for taking a comprehensive, co-ordinating and strategic view of safeguarding practice the SBNI differs from the English and Welsh model where Safeguarding Boards are coterminous with local authority areas and there is no body with responsibility for oversight. As in the other parts of the UK the SBNI and Safeguarding Panels will be part of wider structures for children's services and will link to children's services planning processes. The arrangement proposed in Northern Ireland is

similar to that in England and Wales under the Children Act 2004 but is customised to take account of the particular needs of Northern Ireland, including current and proposed structural arrangements for the delivery of public services. Particular attention has been paid to the introduction of national outcomes for children against which services will be held to account. The approach mirrors that in Every Child Matters, underpinned by the Children Act 2004, and the creation of LSCBs in England and Wales. The SBNI will be the main statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations will cooperate to deliver safeguarding within Northern Ireland and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. Its work links directly to the 'Living in Safety and with Stability' outcome contained within the Strategy for Children and Young People (OFMDFM 2006).

Scotland

CPCs in Scotland are local multi-agency non statutory bodies with responsibility for co-ordinating child protection services. New guidance for CPCs was introduced in 2005 (Scottish Executive 2005). *It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright* (Scottish Executive 2002), the report of the National Audit and Review in Scotland stated that CPCs needed to be strengthened. The report recommended that the remit, structure, membership and scope of CPCs be reviewed. This work was taken forward as part of the government's Child Protection Reform Programme. In contrast to England and Wales, and more recently Northern Ireland, when reforming CPCs, Scotland decided to go down the route of guidance for chief officers rather than statute but the then Labour government stated, it would consider the need for legislation should this prove necessary. Two pieces of legislation provide the legal context for CPCs: the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 sets out local authorities' duties in relation to services for children and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 sets the context for community planning. The 2005 guidance introduced a new model for CPCs which contributed to ministers' wider policy objective of improving the integration of services for children and young people and to achieving national outcomes – that children and young

people should be safe, nurtured, healthy, active, respected and responsible, achieving and included.

The CPC is the key body in terms of the strategic planning of inter-agency child protection work in each local area and as in other parts of the UK the guidance states that it needs to link closely with integrated children's services planning and Community Planning. Since 2006-07 the CPC annual report and business plan has formed a section of the integrated children's services plan.

While reforms in England and Wales resulted in a change to both the name and remit of ACPCs, reflecting a new emphasis on safeguarding rather than narrower child protection responsibilities, Scottish CPCs have retained their original name. The guidance does, however, refer to safeguarding, implying that CPCs are expected to have a wider remit as in England and Wales and child protection policy as a whole is now focused around protecting all children as opposed to a narrower focus on child protection:

The framework provides a basis for all agencies to develop effective safeguarding measures.

Functions

England and Wales

LSCBs were designed to be the vehicle for moving from a narrower focus on child protection to a broader safeguarding agenda. The core functions of LSCBs in England are set out in the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006:

- To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including action where there are concerns, including thresholds; training of people who work with children; recruitment and supervision; investigation of allegations; privately fostered children; co-operation with neighbouring authorities (e.g. procedures when children move between LA areas)
- Participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the local authority

- Communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Procedures to ensure a co-ordinated response to unexpected child deaths
- Monitoring effectiveness of what is done to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Undertaking serious case reviews
- Collecting and analysing information about child deaths.

Where boundaries between LSCBs and partner organisations are not coterminous *Working together to safeguard children*, the guidance covering LSCBs in England, acknowledges that there may be problems having to work to different procedures and protocols or having to participate in several LSCBs. It states, therefore, that it may be helpful for adjoining LSCBs to collaborate in establishing common policies and procedures and joint ways of working; alternatively LSCBs may cover more than one local authority area. The DfES review found some examples of LSCBs having joint procedures but many LSCBs were spending a lot of time writing their own policies and procedures. The variation between different LSCBs' policies on the same issue was difficult for stakeholders covering more than one LSCB. Most people interviewed for the review said they would welcome detailed national templates that they could adapt locally for policy and procedures.

Core functions of LSCBs in Wales are set out in the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Wales) Regulations 2006:

- Fostering a relationship of trust and understanding amongst those represented on the Board
- Raising awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to provide information about how this might be achieved
- Developing policies and procedures to co-ordinate work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including policies and procedures in relation to:
 - (a) information sharing
 - (b) actions, including thresholds for intervention, to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or

welfare

(c) the recruitment and supervision of persons who work with or have regular access to children

(d) the safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered

- Reviewing the efficacy of the measures taken by Board partners to co-ordinate what they do for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and to make whatever recommendations it sees fit to those persons or bodies in light of such a review
- Undertaking "serious case reviews"
- Monitoring the extent to which any recommendations made in a review or a serious case review are being or have been met
- Developing criteria for measuring the performance of the children's services authority against the children and young people's plan in so far as the plan relates to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Disseminating information about best practice in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children amongst the representative bodies and other persons
- Undertaking research into safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Reviewing the training needs of those working in the area with a view to identifying training activities to assist in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Providing training whose purpose is to assist in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Co-operating with other Boards (whether in Wales or England) and any similar such bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland where the Board considers that would be of mutual benefit
- Seeking advice or information where the Board considers that to be desirable for the purposes of any of its functions.

The functions of LSCBs in Wales are more extensive than those set out in the English regulations but LSCBs in Wales do not have responsibilities to collect and analyse

information about child deaths as they do in England.

As in England, *Safeguarding children, working together under the Children Act*, the Welsh guidance covering LSCBs, states that where local authorities, the police and other member agencies are not coterminous it may be helpful for an LSCB to cover an area which includes more than one local authority area, or for adjoining LSCBs to collaborate in developing common policies and procedures and inter-agency training. As in England the Welsh review of LSBCs identified difficulties with working in areas where statutory agencies were not coterminous.

Working Together to Safeguard Children states that the new increased role of LSCBs to safeguard and promote the welfare of children covers three areas of activity:

- Responsive work to protect particular children and young people who are suffering or at risk of suffering harm
- Proactive work that targets particular groups of children in need and vulnerable groups; and
- Preventive work for all children and young people that aims to identify and prevent maltreatment or impairment of health or development.

Although the safeguarding role of LSCBs is far broader than the more narrow child protection focus of ACPCs, the English guidance makes it clear that work to protect children remains a key goal of LSCBs. Indeed it stresses that LSCBs should not focus on their wider safeguarding role if they feel the standard of this core business is inadequate. The Welsh guidance similarly states that:

The focus for Safeguarding Boards should remain the protection of children from abuse and neglect. Policies and practice should therefore be primarily targeted at those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Ensuring that effective policies and practices are in place to protect children and that they are properly co-ordinated remains a key role for Safeguarding Boards. Only when these

are in place should Boards look to their wider remit of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

The DfES review of LSCBs found that there was improved understanding of the wider safeguarding agenda and in some areas the statutory footing for LSCBs appeared to have raised the profile and ownership of safeguarding across agencies. LSCBs were, however, at varying stages in making the transition from child protection to the wider safeguarding agenda, covering prevention and promotional activity. While some were planning significant amounts of work across all areas of activity – preventative, proactive and responsive, others were not yet working beyond their core responsive work for child protection. The review team suggested that this might reflect a wish to get child protection right before moving on to the wider agenda which the guidance outlined as an acceptable way to proceed.

The Welsh review found that LSCBs were aware that their responsibilities for safeguarding were much wider than the previous child protection agenda but many LSCBs expressed concern that the safeguarding agenda was too broad to be effective. The review recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government should consult on further guidance on the scope and responsibilities of LSCBs and other partnership organisations in relation to safeguarding. The review team refer to work undertaken by a number of LSCBs in England to refine the scope of their activities in an attempt to focus on those children most in need. They also looked at the range of activities that might fall within the scope of 'safeguarding' and set out a possible approach to apportioning responsibility for the different aspects of safeguarding to the various partnership organisations in Wales - LSCBs, Children and Young People's Partnerships (C&YPPs), Health, Social Care and Well Being Partnerships (HSCWBs), and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

Northern Ireland

The specific responsibilities of ACPCs in Northern Ireland as set out in the guidance *Co-operating to safeguard children* are to:

- Develop, agree and review policies and procedures for inter-agency work to protect children
- Improve outcomes for children by setting objectives, performance indicators and establishing appropriate thresholds for intervention
- Ensure equality of opportunity is central to the development of child protection policies and procedures
- Put in place and implement a strategy in conjunction with CPPs for developing effective working relationships between services, professionals and community groups with the aim of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are at risk of significant harm
- Communicate to individual services and professional groups their shared responsibility for protecting children
- Bring to the attention of board members within HSS Boards and Trusts their responsibilities for child protection issues and developments in the area and how the ACPC Business plan will address these
- Monitor and evaluate on a regular and continuing basis how well services work together to protect children and ensure a specific report on outcomes is conveyed to trusts, boards and agencies of the ACPC
- Develop an inter agency training and development strategy
- Ensure there is a link between ACPCs and the Northern Ireland Sex Offender Strategic Management Committee
- Develop a public communication strategy
- Develop an information strategy aimed at children and families to enable them to understand child protection processes
- Undertake case management reviews
- Continually review local ways of working
- Work collaboratively with other ACPCs where appropriate.

The integration of health and social services and the different role of local government means that Northern Ireland have been unable to replicate all the provisions of Every Child Matters or the Children Act 2004 in their new arrangements to protect children. The new SBNI and safeguarding panel arrangements are, however, an

acknowledgement that safeguarding extends beyond traditional child protection responsibilities. The scope of the role of the SBNi includes four elements to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:

- Activity that affects all children and aims to safeguard them from maltreatment or impairment of health or development
- Proactive work which aims to target specific groups
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are more vulnerable than the general population
- Protecting children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2007).

Scotland

CPCs in Scotland have a number of functions:

- Public information: develop, implement and regularly review a communications strategy
- Continuous improvement: ensure agencies have their own up to date policies and procedures; develop, disseminate and review inter-agency policies and procedures; ensure protocols are developed around key issues where there is agreement that this is required; have an overview of management information from all key agencies; develop and implement inter-agency quality assurance mechanisms; identify and promote good practice, address issues of poor practice and encourage learning from practice; promote, commission and assure the quality and delivery of inter-agency training
- Strategic planning: demonstrate effective communication and co-operation; work with other multi agency partnerships and structures (Scottish Executive 2005).

In addition to these functions the guidance for CPCs states that they should seek opportunities to share best practice and learning with other CPCs. As in England and Wales the Scottish guidance also states that CPCs may want to share arrangements with other local authorities.

Respondents who were interviewed for the

process review of the child protection reform programme (Daniel et al 2007) indicated that the roles of the CPC were much clearer than they had been prior to the reform programme. Skinner and Bell (2007) reviewed one CPC in Scotland. They found that at a strategic level there was full 'sign up' to procedures and policies from partners: all 20 CPC member respondents to a questionnaire believed the CPC rated either effective or very effective in relation to the production of inter-agency procedures and guidelines; multi agency training was seen as effective and of high quality and training materials described as excellent. Information to the public and service users was, however, neither well developed nor widely available.

Membership England and Wales

There were two problems associated with membership of ACPCs in England and Wales: firstly it was questionable whether the most appropriate people were invited to attend; secondly, even when the most appropriate people were invited, there was a question around whether they actually attended. Core membership of LSCBs is set out in the Children Act 2004 as representatives of the local authority plus partners who have a duty to co-operate with the local authority in the establishment and operation of the LSCB and have shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions: district councils, chief police officers, local probation boards, youth offending teams, Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts, NHS trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts, Connexions services and CAFCASS (Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service), governors or directors of Secure Training Centres and governors or directors of prisons that detain children.

In addition *Working together to safeguard children* sets out other organisations that should be co-opted onto the LSCB as non statutory partners in England – for example, those responsible for adult social service functions, adult health services, particularly mental health and disability services; and others that the LSCB will need to co-operate with in its work - faith groups, state and independent schools, FE colleges, children's centres, GPs, independent healthcare

organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, in areas where they have significant local activity, the armed forces, Immigration Service and National Asylum Support service, the coronial service, dental health services, domestic violence forums, drug and alcohol services, drug action teams, housing, culture and leisure services, housing providers, LA legal services, MAPPA, local sports bodies and services, local Family Justice council, local Criminal Justice Board, other health providers such as pharmacists, representatives of service users, sexual health services, the Crown Prosecution Service, witness support services.

The DfES review provided evidence of the level of engagement by various agencies in England. It found that:

- The profile and priority given to safeguarding by most health agencies had increased under LSCBs from ACPCs: PCTs were clear about their roles and responsibilities; clear job descriptions or agreements that set out the expectations of LSCB members helped to secure sufficiently senior representation from PCTs, NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts; PCTs had a high rate of attendance at LSCB board meetings and picked up the highest share of the costs after local authorities; lack of co-terminosity affected some NHS partners; there was little evidence of Strategic Health Authority (SHA) involvement but this may have been because SHAs were in a process of change with their number reducing from 28 to 10
- Police engagement varied from excellent to marginal; a number of issues arose from the difference between police and local authority boundaries when one police force covered numerous LSCBs: it is resource intensive for the police to be represented at a sufficiently senior level, difficult to provide adequate funding and hard to switch between LSCBs different policies and procedures.
- There was a mixed picture in terms of probation services engagement: representatives from probation boards only attended LSCB meetings 70% of the time
- Arrangements between LSCBs and MAPPA were being embedded but links could be improved

- There was a mixed picture in terms of the engagement of Youth offending teams and the governor or director of any prison that ordinarily detains children: YOT attendance was 77%
- The attendance rate of Connexions Partnerships was 80%
- Some LSCBs had one district council member representing all the other districts in the area, on other LSCBs all the districts represented themselves.
- The large national voluntary organisations such as NSPCC were well represented but some LSCBs had no VCS representation, engagement was difficult in areas where there were numerous disparate small groups
- There was no evidence LSCBs were routinely engaging the early years sector; in most areas schools were not active participants but in a small number there was good involvement; LSCBs had not involved themselves significantly with independent schools.

The review team concluded that statutory partners were demonstrating commitment to LSCBs but stated that attendance on its own did not guarantee effective activity between meetings. If statutory partners did not share responsibility for safeguarding they warned that there was a risk the local authority would shoulder more of the burden than it should. Indeed in some areas partners thought too much of the lead role was falling to the local authority, in particular to its children's social care function. Some felt it was a social care dominated agenda and reported they had difficulty understanding the language used at LSCB meetings. There were also issues about the level of seniority of representation with some members attending but unable to speak for or commit their organisation. Other members felt they did not have enough influence because their organisation did not contribute enough.

Working Together to Safeguard Children states that elected members should not be members of the LSCB but their role, through membership of governance bodies such as the cabinet of the local authority or a scrutiny committee or governance board, is to hold their organisation and its officers to account for their contribution to the effective functioning of the LSCB. The

DfES review of LSBs found that lead members were engaged in some areas but there was scope to increase their role in terms of scrutiny and challenge. There was little evidence Overview and Scrutiny Committees were yet taking an interest.

Core membership of LSCBs in Wales is the same as in England and set out in the Children Act 2004. The Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Wales) Regulations 2006 which prescribe the minimum membership of LSCBs for each of the partner agencies are, however, far more prescriptive than the parallel arrangements in England where there is no regulation on the appropriate level of representation. The Welsh review found that LSCBs in Wales supported the approach that the Welsh Assembly Government had taken. There were no problems with these more prescriptive membership requirements, most agencies were represented at an appropriately senior level and the use of substitutes was within reasonable limits.

Through statutory guidance Welsh Ministers may also require LSCBs to seek the involvement of others in the work of LSCBs. *Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act* refers specifically to the need for LSCBs to involve:

- CAFCASS CYMRU;
- The NSPCC;
- Adult social services;
- Adult health services (in particular adult mental health and adult disability services);
- Faith groups;
- State and independent schools;
- Further Education Colleges including 6th Form Colleges;
- Children's centres;
- Independent children's homes;
- Independent fostering providers;
- GPs;
- Independent healthcare organisations; and
- Voluntary and community sector organisations
- The armed forces, Immigration Service and National Asylum Support Service where they have significant local activity.

Where the number or size of organisations precludes individual representation e.g. in the case of schools, the guidance states that the local authority should seek to involve them via existing networks or forums. It also states that the Care Standards Inspectorate Wales (CSIW) should develop close working relationships with LSCBs and other organisations should be invited to join the LSCB or be involved through some other mechanism – the coronial service, dental health services, domestic violence forums, substance misuse services, housing culture and leisure services, housing providers, LA legal services, MAPPA, local sports bodies and services, Local Family Justice Council, Local Criminal Justice Board, other health providers such as pharmacists, representatives of service users, sexual health services, CPS, named doctors, nurses and midwives, adult mental health services, CAMHS, dental health services, representatives of foster carers and witness support services.

Evidence presented to the Welsh Review Group suggests that the arrangements in respect of both CAFCASS CYMRU and the NSPCC are working well and that they are appropriately represented on and involved in the work of LSCBs where they are able to field a representative; adult services also appear to be reasonably engaged. Discussions with LSCBs indicated, however, that it was not always possible to engage with the other prospective partners:

- The numbers of schools in some areas made it difficult to secure a single representative to cover all, or even some, of them
- GPs were frequently reluctant to become involved in LSCBs
- Discussions with the further education sector showed a willingness and desire to be involved in the work of LSCBs but, evidence suggested, few had been invited to join
- Engagement with faith and voluntary groups had not always been achieved; smaller voluntary and community groups were often difficult to identify and reach.

The review concluded that there was scope to strengthen the requirements to involve other agencies in the work of LSCBs through strengthening membership requirements through regulations. It recommended that

Welsh Ministers should consult on amending the Local Safeguarding Children Board (Wales) Regulations, to strengthen the requirements to include agencies other than those named in the Children Act 2004 in the membership of LSCBs, including in particular:

- CAFCASS CYMRU
- NSPCC
- Adult social services
- Adult health services and
- Further education and 6th form colleges.

The roles and responsibilities of the statutory partners of LSCBs in Wales are clearly set out in *Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act* (Welsh Assembly Government 2004). However the review of LSCBs noted that the guidance makes only limited reference to the roles of individual senior managers within agencies and a number of LSCB members and staff within individual agencies expressed concern that senior managers were not always aware of their statutory responsibilities. Despite the recommendations in the Laming Report, many senior managers were content to delegate responsibility for safeguarding without retaining the appropriate accountability. Whilst the Review Group were satisfied that there was no failure on the part of statutory Board partners to fulfil their statutory duties under the Children Act 2004, they expressed concern that there was a potential for a repetition of the events that led to the Victoria Climbié tragedy with managers abdicating responsibility for the actions of their staff. They recommended, therefore, that existing guidance be expanded and strengthened to highlight the individual roles and responsibilities of individual senior managers.

LSCBs are required to exercise an independent voice and scrutiny in relation to the quality of services and partnerships for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare which has implications in terms of who chairs them. The DfES review found that most LSCBs in England were chaired by the Director of Children's Services (DCS) or another local authority employee. In 73% of cases the chair came from the local authority. Eight LSCBs were chaired by the Local authority Chief Executive and just over 40 LSCBs were chaired by a

second or third tier local authority officer. There were 25 independent chairs and several others were considering appointing an independent chair. There are resource implications in appointing independent chairs as they normally have to be paid from the LSCB budget, but resources permitting, the government believes there are advantages in appointing independent chairs to avoid conflicts of interest and to provide independent scrutiny. Those consulted during the review felt it would be useful to share good practice about job descriptions for chairs which emphasised the skills and attributes a chair should have. It was suggested a training package for chairs would also be useful.

The Welsh review found that chairs were from an appropriately senior level, mostly from social services or education departments. The benefits of an independent chair were recognised but so were the cost implications of such an appointment.

ACPCs in England and Wales struggled in relation to user participation (Morrison and Lewis 2005). The English and Welsh guidance both state that LSCBs should put in place arrangements to ascertain the views of parents and carers and the wishes and feelings of children. The DfES review found, however, that there was little evidence of involvement of parents and carers and LSCBs were finding it difficult to engage children and young people.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland *Co-operating to Safeguard Children* states that ACPCs should be made up of members of the main statutory and voluntary agencies involved in child protection work and agencies should ensure participation and representation at a sufficiently senior level. The following should be represented – the HSS board, HSS trusts, child protection panels, General practitioners, education and library boards, the council for catholic maintained schools, PSNI, PBNI, the juvenile justice agency, NSPCC and the co-ordinator or senior social work practitioner SSAFA Forces Help Social Work Services where there is a large service base in the area. The guidance states that the ACPC should make appropriate arrangements to involve other agencies and professionals in its work as necessary and that they should

consider setting up working groups to carry out specific tasks, provide specialist advice and carry out audits in conjunction with child protection panels to look at inter-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In their overview report the Social Services Inspectorate (2006) stated that there was a strongly held view from the interviews undertaken during the inspection that representation on ACPCs should be at a more senior level and agency representatives should have a mandate to take decisions to enable strategic and resource issues to be addressed and negotiated. Several ACPC members commented that they did not have sufficient seniority or authority within their agency to properly fulfil the responsibilities required by ACPC membership. Inconsistent attendance by some members of ACPCs and CPPs was common, making it difficult to build an effective working forum.

Co-operating to Safeguard Children states that the chair may come from any member agency, or be independent, and that member agencies may agree to rotate chairing between them.

The SBNI will have a wider membership than ACPCs drawn from the statutory, voluntary and community sector. Membership will be a statutory requirement for a variety of bodies and organisations. The SBNI will have an independent chair with a direct reporting line to the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Core membership will be defined by the SBNI upon its formation. Safeguarding Panels will similarly derive their membership from a wide range of agencies and their chairs will also be independent. A Young Person's Reference Group will be established to support the work of the SBNI.

Scotland

In Scotland the guidance for CPCs states that they should comprise representatives of the main statutory and voluntary agencies which have varying responsibilities for protecting children from abuse. Agencies who should be represented on the core membership of the CPC are – local authority social work services, including children and families and criminal justice; local authority education services;

community services, including youth and leisure services; housing services; health services; services in relation to drugs and alcohol; the police; procurator fiscal; Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA); the armed forces in areas where there is a significant presence; the independent education sector in areas where there is a significant presence; and the voluntary sector.

The guidance states that each chief officer must ensure their representative on the CPC carries sufficient delegated authority to realise the objectives of the business plan on behalf of their agency and that the representative must be of a sufficiently senior grade to make the required policy and resource commitments. Procurator Fiscals (PFs) who attend CPCs must be at least principal depute grade but the guidance states that CPC chairs should consider how agendas can be structured to allow PF representatives to attend only in respect of matters to which they can contribute.

Membership of the CPC which Skinner and Bell reviewed (2007) included representatives from social work, education, reporters, members of the Children's Panel, Procurator Fiscal's office, NHS board (child protection nurse, consultant paediatrician, general practitioner, consultant psychiatrist, police surgeon, strategic co-ordinator), army welfare services, police and the voluntary sector. Participation from some partners was good with a core group of nine each attending at least 10 times out of a possible 14 attendances. As in England and Wales, however, partnership was unequal with some members having considerably more influence than others:

- The three local authorities (the CPC covered three local areas) were identified as the most influential followed by paediatricians and the police.
- A number of respondents described the CPC as a 'social work' organisation.
- There was low attendance and limited participation by the education services in two of the local authorities.
- The size of the CPC led to formality and problems in developing and maintaining a team ethos.

- Some members explained that they felt diffident about contributing to the discussion at some CPC meetings as their agencies did not provide funding for the CPC and others argued the partnership was not equal.
- Some practitioners and managers in education and social work departments were unable to name their agency representative on the CPC; a number of CPC members described problems in feeding back to other members of their own organisations as some did not have an identifiable process for this to happen.

Skinner and Bell point out that many of the issues raised in their study were addressed within the new guidance to CPCs in 2005, but they stress that the guidance inevitably centres on structural and procedural matters. Evidence from the Process Review of the Child Protection Reform Programme suggests that the new guidance has improved partnership working. People who were interviewed for the review observed real benefits from there now being a more diverse mix of people at different operational levels and from different agency backgrounds participating in CPCs, and CPCs were seen to be capitalising on the skills base of their membership in order to inform decision making and policy development.

The guidance states that the chair should be a senior officer from one of the key agencies or an independent person appointed to the task and that chief officers should make or agree the appointment.

CPCs in Scotland are led and owned by all agencies; clearly mandated with delegated authority for action and able to undertake a range of core functions and activities with flexibility for local conditions. The chair of the CPC manages the lead officer who reports to Chief Officers. The guidance states that Chief Officers should demonstrate leadership and accountability for child protection work on behalf of their agencies but, as in England and Wales, Chief Officers work within the accountability structures of their own organisations. The Chief Executive of a local authority should ensure a Chief Officer's Group is established and the group should meet to agree the annual report of the CPC and business plan for the next year and come together with sufficient frequency to discharge

its responsibilities in relation to the protection of children and young people.

CPC members who were interviewed for the process review of the Child Protection Reform Programme in Scotland (Daniel et al 2007) overwhelmingly felt that the new model guidance had led to CPCs having far more significance and influence and enabled them to be far more effective. The Chief Officer's Group was seen as invaluable and important in ensuring that child protection issues remained on the agenda at the highest level. Some people felt, however, that CPCs should have been put on a statutory footing in the same way that LSCBs had been in England and Wales. One person who was interviewed told the review team:

For some reason there was a resistance in the Child Protection Reform Programme for doing that, quite where that resistance was coming from I'm not clear ... so eventually we ended up with CPC national guidance which was not rooted into legislative provision, which I think is a major disappointment and probably, a major own goal.

The guidance states that the perspectives of children and young people and their families should be clearly evidenced in the work of the CPC, that work should be informed by their perspective, and that children and young people should be involved in the development and implementation of the public information and communication strategies.

Funding England and Wales

The funding of former ACPCs in England and Wales was identified as problematic. The Climbié report (Laming 2003) suggested that a budget contributed to by each of the local agencies should be available to LSCBs. The children Act 2004 states that statutory Board partners may make direct payments for purposes connected with an LSCB or provide staff, services and other resources. The total budget and contribution by each member organisation should be agreed locally but core contributions should be provided by the local authority, Primary Care Trusts and the police; other organisations' contributions will vary to reflect their resources and local circumstances.

In the DfES review LSCBs reported significant increased funding from the level of the previous ACPCs. A more even pattern of funding was emerging with less, though still significant, variation across the country. In all cases the local authority was a contributor with other frequent contributions from PCTs, the police, probation and CAFCASS. The bulk of expenditure was on staff and then training. In some cases the local authority was carrying the whole financial burden for the LSCB. Financial constraints meant that some LSCBs who took part in the DfES review felt they only had the resource to concentrate on their child protection work and not to cover their wider safeguarding remit. There was a widespread view expressed that it would be helpful for the government to be more prescriptive about LSCB funding, not just from local authorities but other agencies including PCTs and police forces. The review recommended that LSCBs should be more adequately resourced and spend less time discussing budgets.

Another related concern expressed in England is around the funding commitments of health trusts. PCTs lack ring fenced budgets for children from which to fund safeguarding activity and health cuts have meant that some health trusts have been unable to contribute (Vevers 2007).

The Welsh review found it difficult to establish reliable information on the funding of LSCBs but from the evidence which was available, the review team concluded that the main costs continued to fall to social service departments; they also provided most of the other resources needed to run LSCBs. Ensuring appropriate funds were forthcoming from statutory partners was a significant problem and a time consuming one. The overwhelming majority of LSCBs in Wales called for greater clarity and guidance about the funding and resourcing of LSCB activities. The review team concluded that it must be recognised that safeguarding is a corporate responsibility and that the associated costs should not fall wholly or mainly on one agency. They pointed out, however, that under the Children Act 2004, LSCB partners cannot be required to make any particular level of contribution to the costs of running a LSCB and that Welsh Ministers are, therefore,

restricted in the degree of prescription that they can apply. They recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government should consult on and publish a funding model for LSCBs in Wales as non-statutory guidance in a revision of *Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act*.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland ACPC expenditure is a matter for local agreement. The trust is responsible for core funding the CPP and providing it with support services but it should be supported by all its constituent agencies.

When the new SBNI arrangements come into place the DHSSPS will have responsibility for the SBNI in relation to core funding of the chairman's and lay members' posts and administrative requirements such as accommodation and support staff. The new legislation will enable statutory member organisations to pool funding for service delivery, including interagency training and public awareness raising initiatives.

Scotland

The absence of a budget was a significant problem for the CPC that Skinner and Bell (2007) reviewed leading to considerable effort being directed into securing funds on an ad hoc basis. The new guidance states that chief officers have collective responsibility to ensure the CPC has resources to fulfil the business plan and that resources will be agreed by the Chief Officers Group.

Performance management arrangements England and Wales

Morrison and Lewis (2005) state that if LSCBs are to add value to ACPCs they will need to demonstrate not just service based data but also information that can demonstrate whether safeguarding is actually making a difference to the quality of children's lives. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* states that the outcomes and indicators for 'staying safe' should be a baseline against which safeguarding and promoting welfare will be inspected, but LSCBs should also identify local performance indicators.

The DfES review found that a small number of LSCBs were developing their own

performance measures but overall there was little evidence of performance management arrangements. Those who were interviewed for the review agreed that LSCBs would not necessarily know when they were doing a good job or what good performance would look like and thought it would be useful if there were nationally set criteria or standards against which LSCBs could assess themselves or compare performance. The LSCB Challenge and Improvement Tool has now been produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The tool is aimed at assisting LSCBs in analysing their own effectiveness. It is process orientated at good governance and not meant to look specifically at outcomes for children and young people. It can be adapted to LSCBs specific contexts and its use is voluntary.

Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act sets out the monitoring and review functions of LSCBs in Wales:

- To review the efficacy of the measures taken by each person or body represented on the Board to co-ordinate what they do for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the area of the Board and to make whatever recommendations it sees fit to those persons or bodies in light of such a review;
- To monitor the extent to which any recommendations made in a review are being or have been met;
- To develop criteria for measuring the performance of the children's services authority against the plan produced under section 26 of the 2004 Act (children and young people's plans), in so far as the plan relates to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in an authority's area.

Arrangements for the scrutiny of LSCB functions were acknowledged as requiring further work in the Welsh review. LSCBs reported that they would welcome a self audit toolkit.

To avoid duplication of work the English guidance states that the LSCB should ensure its monitoring role complements and contributes to the work of the Children's Trust and the inspectorates. Joint Area Reviews (JAR) of children's services assess how children's services, taken together, contribute to improving outcomes for children and young

people. The guidance states that the JAR should look at the effectiveness of the LSCB and the local authority will lead in taking action if intervention in LSCBs processes is necessary.

The Welsh guidance also states that the LSCB should ensure its monitoring role complements the work of the children's partnerships and the inspectorates and that the effectiveness of the LSCB should form part of the judgement of the inspectorates.

Northern Ireland

Co-operating to Safeguard Children states that each ACPC in Northern Ireland should produce a business plan including measurable objectives and the CPP should review annually the child protection work in its area. The Social Services Inspectorate (2006) found that all ACPCs produced annual reports which incorporated business plans but there was little comment on how outcomes achieved would be measured, who had lead responsibility for actions and how the overall process would be audited and monitored.

Under the new arrangements an Annual Report setting out performance and progress towards agreed objectives for the SBNI will be provided to the Minister. A self assessment tool has been developed based around the Wigan tool.

Scotland

The guidance for CPCs in Scotland states that there will be a formal process to evaluate progress against agreed objectives. Each CPC must prepare and submit an annual report and business plan to the government. A format is recommended so that there is some consistency across CPCs. Individual agencies have responsibility for quality assurance within their own agencies but CPCs have responsibility for the development and implementation of inter-agency quality assurance mechanisms. Each CPC must:

- Agree, implement and review multi agency quality assurance mechanisms for inter-agency work, including auditing against the Framework for Standards
- Ensure these quality assurance mechanisms directly contribute to the continuous improvement of services to protect children and young people

- Contribute to the preparation for the integrated system of inspection of child protection services
- Consider the findings and lessons from the inspection process nationally and in relation to the inspection of their area
- Report on the outcome of these activities, and make recommendations to the Chief Officer Group, who are accountable overall for the quality of services including child protection systems.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the various mechanisms for the strategic implementation, development and monitoring of inter-agency child protection policy and practice which exist in the various parts of the UK and shown that there has been significant reform in all parts of the UK in recent years. Once new proposals for a regional SBNI are implemented in Northern Ireland Scotland will be the only part of the UK which has not replaced non statutory CPCs with statutory processes. In common with the rest of the UK Scotland has extended the functions and membership of its CPCs and strengthened lines of accountability and performance management arrangements but has not introduced Safeguarding Boards.

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